Wednesday 30 September 2026

1:00pm	**Registrations and arrival afternoon tea day one** Registration Desk, Organiser Office 6, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
2:00pm – 5:00pm	**Complex Needs Conference 2026** **Conference Day One** **Venue:** Goldfields Theatre, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre **Address:** 1 Convention Centre Pl, South Wharf VIC 3006 **Dress Code:** Smart casual
PLENARY SESSION	
2:00pm – 2:20pm	**Welcome to Country and digeridoo (yidaki) performance** Wurundjeri Elder Tony Garvey, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
2:20pm – 2:30pm	**The host's welcome and housekeeping announcements** Julie McCrossin, Veteran Radio and Television Broadcaster, Conference Host
2:30pm – 2:50pm	**Opening address** Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Victoria
2:50pm – 3:50pm	**Opening keynote: Hard to reach people or hard to reach services? The history of the lived experience movement in the UK and beyond** Mark Johnson MBE, Founder and CEO, Lived Expert, UK, International Speaker
3:50pm – 4:50pm	**Panel discussion: One person, many systems: can service integration ever become a reality?** Dr Adam Deacon, Child & Adolescent Forensic Psychiatrist, Bayside Health, Community Forensic Youth Mental Health Service Mark Johnson MBE, Founder and CEO, Lived Expert, UK, International Speaker Keith Hamburger AM, Managing Director, Knowledge Consulting Pty Ltd Michelle Schroth, Self Employed Support Worker, Lived Experience Advocate Panel Chair: Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host
4:50pm – 5:00pm	**Setting the scene for what's to come…** Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host
5:00pm – 7:00pm	**Welcome drinks** **Venue:** The General Assembly, 29 S Wharf Promenade, South Wharf VIC 3006 (290m flat walk)

Thursday 1 October 2026

8:00am – 5:00pm	**Registrations open day two** Registration Desk, Organiser Office 6, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
9:00am – 5:00pm	**Complex Needs Conference 2026** **Conference Day Two** **Venue:** Goldfields Theatre, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre **Address:** 1 Convention Centre Pl, South Wharf VIC 3006 **Dress Code:** Smart casual
PLENARY SESSION	
9:00am – 9:15am	**The host's welcome and Acknowledgement of Country** Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host
9:15am – 9:30am	**Opening performance** Wild at Heart Community Arts
9:30am – 9:45am	**Complex Needs Conference 2026** Vaughan Winther, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO)
9:45am – 10:30am	**Keynote** Jeffery Amatto, CEO Founder, MCRLJ Aboriginal Corporation
10:30am – 11:00am	**Morning tea refreshments** Goldfields Event Space, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

11:00am – 1:00pm	**Practice stream**	**Research and program showcase stream**	**Lived experience stream**	**Youth foundations stream**
Room	**Goldfields Theatre**	**Eureka Room 1**	**Eureka Room 2**	**Eureka Room 3**
Session	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**
11:00am – 11:20am	**Developing a cultural toolkit for staff in forensic disability services** Samantha Atkinson and Cheryl McDowell (DFFH)	**Bridging systems: creating seamless pathways for people with complex mental health needs** John Dermanakis (Northern Health) and Emma Storen (Neami National)	**From lived experience to leadership** Pattie Phillips (Hope Network) and Kane Nuttall (The Power in You Project)	**Bridging narratives towards brighter futures for young people with complex needs** Samantha Brooks (Access Health and Community), Emi Nakamura, and Adam Napoleone (DFFH)
11:25am – 11:45am	**"It doesn't have to be complicated": back to basics service collaboration in regional Victoria** Annabelle Scott (ermha365) and Codie Stone (ermha365)	**Using linked data to evaluate the Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative (MACNI)** Jack Marozzi (Nous Group), Kaylene Pfeiffer and Ben Ryan (DFFH)	**Between the blue and green - embedding lived experience voices in prison officer training** Jenna Harrison (Corrections Victoria) and Dr Marietta Martinovic (RMIT University)	**Bridging the gap for young people living with a disability in out of home care** Sam Carew and Fion Tang (Yooralla)

11:50am – 12:10pm	**A bespoke pathway across mental health, disability and alcohol and other drugs systems: practice learnings from a young woman's complex needs journey** Jade Preston and Renee Sinclair (Office of Chief Psychiatrist, Department of Health)	**From fragmentation to framework: program adaptation in forensic disability intervention** Dr Margaret Nixon and Dr Nichola Tyler (Swinburne University)	**Beyond tokenism: embedding authentic lived experience leadership at the Mental Health Tribunal** Tracey Taylor and Jan Dundon (Mental Health Tribunal)	**Supporting effective rehabilitation and reintegration of young people in adult custodial settings** Innika La Fontaine and Rhia Mikkor (Corrections Victoria)
12:15pm – 12:35pm	**Addressing the elephant in the room: trauma informed practice in trauma inducing environments** Chelsea Troutman and Tegan Ryan (Elements ABC)	**Open doors, open futures: how public libraries support people transitioning from prison through access, advocacy, and community connection** Associate Professor Jane Garner (Charles Sturt University)	**Bridging systems from the inside: when lived experience and education combine to change outcomes** Michelle Schroth (Independent Support Worker and Lived Experience Panel Member)	**Changing lives - how a therapeutic model of support can change the path for young people with complex needs** Wendy Pettifer and Joumana Hudson (Community Living Options)
12:40pm – 1:00pm	**The house model of collaborative care teams** Dr Maxwell Fraser (DFFH) and Associate Professor Michael Gordon (Monash Health)	**Disrupting the silos: a place-based governance model for local homelessness action** Tasmin Lewis (Wayss) and Maia Avendano-Jones (Greater Dandenong City Council)	**Feasibility randomised control trial of the Healthy and HomED model of care** Claire Doherty (St Vincent's Hospital)	**From risk to relational stability: supporting young people across systems** Mitchell Bayliss and Anneke De Wilt (CBChange Pty Ltd)
1:00pm – 2:00pm	**Lunch** Goldfields Event Space, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre			
2:00pm – 3:35pm	**Practice stream**	**Research and program showcase stream**	**Lived experience stream**	**Youth foundations stream**
Room	**Goldfields Theatre**	**Eureka Room 1**	**Eureka Room 2**	**Eureka Room 3**
Session	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**
2:00pm – 2:20pm	**Communication support: bridging the gap between the community and the criminal justice system** Grace Scheiner (Applied Communication Skills) and Sumail Singh (GEO Group)	**The development and implementation of a program about safe sexual internet use for people with cognitive impairment who have sexually offended** Lycette de Souza and Dr Matt Frize (Forensic Disability Services, DFFH)	**From custody to courtroom: reimagining justice environments through lived experience** Dr Marietta Martinovic (RMIT University) Di Missen (Court Services Victoria) and Kiki Gill (Beyond the Stone Walls Advisory Collective)	**Genuine partnership in practice: culture, disability and trust in complex systems** Brett Mulgrew (DJCS, Youth Justice)
2:25pm – 2:45pm	**Complex client coordination in a regional setting - MACNI experiences from the Mallee region** Garth Boyd (Complex Psychology) and Karen Walshaw (DFFH)	**Complex needs, or complex systems? Lessons from the Community Restorative Centre (CRC)** Brian Were and Claire McMahon (Community Restorative Centre)	**Holding the line together: peer support as the foundation for system change** Dariane McLean (Inclusion Australia)	**Why won't they! Four tasks for better multi-agency collaboration** Igor Tomic (Violence Reduction Unit) and Taryn Escreet (DJCS)

2:50pm – 3:10pm	**Corrections Victoria Disability Services: an integrated response** Elena Valimberti and Rebecca Barbie (Corrections Victoria)	**From pessimism to possibility - a case study of returning from seclusion and restraints to engagement and autonomy** Lisa Warren, Ben Moberely and Karin Ryan (Code Black Psychology)	**Building the narrative for life in the community: speech pathology and reintegration from custody** Jan Mackey and June Gladman (Applied Communication Skills)	**A bridge to somewhere: education gaps and barriers for young people with exceptionally complex needs in Western Australia** Lara Harmsworth, Becky Anderson (Department of Communities) and Josette Hamilton (Department of Education WA)
3:15pm – 3:35pm	**Supporting neurodivergent people in the criminal justice system** Deborah Westfield, Debbie Moon (Corrections Victoria), Dr Shae Wissell (Re:think Dyslexia) and Lorana Bartels (Australian National University)	**Sustaining the workforce through transitions: the stabilising role of reflective practice groups** Shane Puxley (Victoria University)	**SUSTain: Co-designing transitional alcohol and other drug care for women leaving prison in Victoria** Rebecca Winter (Burnet Institute) and Nina Storey (Flatout Inc)	**"Wrap around me and my child": improving supports for children with autism, intellectual disability and behaviours of concern** Justine Schutz and Hannah Turner (Royal Children's Hospital)
3:35pm – 3:55pm	**Afternoon tea refreshments and poster presentations** Goldfields Event Space, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre			
PLENARY SESSION				
3:55pm – 4:55pm	**Panel discussion: Crisis response is not a service model: how do we build responses that support complex people without reliance on emergency services?** Panellists to be announced			
4:55pm – 5:00pm	**Closing comments** Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host			
5:00pm	**Close of day two**			
5:00pm – 6:00pm	**Posters & Drinks** Goldfields Event Space, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre			

Friday 2 October 2026

8:00am	**Registrations open day three** Registration Desk, Organiser Office 6, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
9:00am – 1:00pm	**Complex Needs Conference 2026** **Conference Day Three** **Venue:** Goldfields Theatre, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre **Address:** 1 Convention Centre Pl, South Wharf VIC 3006 **Dress Code:** Smart casual

PLENARY SESSION	
9:00am – 9:10am	**Welcome day three and Acknowledgement of Country** Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host
9:10am – 9:25am	**Complex Needs Conference 2026** Karenza Louis-Smith, Chief Executive Officer, ermha365
9:25am – 10:25am	**Keynote: Young offenders with "high and complex" needs: whose label, how helpful, and what should we really do?** Justice Andrew Becroft, High Court judge, Auckland, International Speaker
10:25am – 10:45am	**Morning tea refreshments** Goldfields Event Space, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

CONCURRENT SESSIONS				
10:45am – 11:55am	**Practice stream**	**Research and program showcase stream**	**Lived experience stream**	**Youth foundations stream**
Room	**Goldfields Theatre**	**Eureka Room 1**	**Eureka Room 2**	**Eureka Room 3**
Session	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**	**20 minutes**
10:45am – 11:05am	**Getting on the same page: supporting community safety by connecting the unconnected** Atlanta Blount, Joy Herman and Clare Humphries (DJCS, Forensic Intervention Services)	**Health justice partnerships for people with complex needs** Laura Brennan and Kym Coupe (First Step)	**Holding it together: supporting sudden carers when mum is taken into custody** Stacey Aslangul and Kiki Gill (Hope Network)	**Integrating systemic family therapy and positive behaviour support in young people with cognitive disability who offend** Dr Matt Frize and Mark McGowan (Forensic Disability Services, DFFH)
11:10am – 11:30am	**Holding risk together: conceptualising and communicating risk** Kogilavani Kunasegaran and Hannah O'Shea (ACSO)	**An approach to address Queensland's broken social and justice systems that will strengthen families and communities, reduce crime, save lives and billions of dollars in the out years** Keith Hamburger AM (Knowledge Consulting)	**Navigating the intersect of family violence and disability: collaborative systems response** Abbie Koenig and Annabel Hastings (Berry Street)	**Addressing systemic gaps for young people experiencing co-occurring mental health, AOD and homelessness, through cross-sectorial partnerships and integrated care** Leo Sleinis and Jo Karzons (Melbourne City Mission), Charley Brunton and Alex Attwood-Geaney (St Vincents Hospital)
11:35am – 11:55am	**Navigating the complexity of forensic disability casework and the power of therapeutic jurisprudence** Cheyne Williamson (Forensic Disability Services, DFFH)	**More than compliance: how coordinated services plans shape life beyond orders** Felicity Hampel AM SC and Carmel Arthur (Post Sentence Authority)	**Provision of supported housing for mental health consumers: integrating service systems to deliver long-term housing outcomes** Meghan Burkett and Jen Williams (Northern Health)	**Beyond a bed: relational safety, help seeking and system navigation in a housing-plus model for out-of-home care leavers** Heidi Tucker (Anchor Community Care Ltd)

PLENARY SESSION

12:00pm – 12:50pm	**Panel discussion: When the system says "too complex": who is responsible?** Kylie Bowden, Victorian Senior Practitioner, Office of Professional Practice, Community Operations and Practice Leadership Division, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Associate Professor Sophie Adams, Chief Psychiatrist, Department of Health Larissa Strong, Commissioner, Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice and Community Safety Justice Andrew Becroft, High Court judge, Auckland, International Speaker Pattie Phillips, Community & Stakeholder Engagement Co-ordinator, Hope Network (formally Prison Network), Lived Experience Advocate Panel Chair: Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host
12:50pm – 1:00pm	**Closing comments** Julie McCrossin, veteran radio and television broadcaster, conference host
1:00pm	**Close of The Complex Needs Conference 2026**